Finally, Sir, we will implement the recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission. I ask for everybody's support. We want to build India as an economic powerhouse through the philosophy of cooperative federalism. Centre and States must work together. States must become prosperous. Centre will help States to become prosperous so that India can also become prosperous. I ask all of you to please return the Bill which I have presented to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the question is:

That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year, 2004-05, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we shall take up Clause-by- Clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2, 3 and the Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I beg to move:

'That the Bill be returned'.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA (Tamil Nadu):Sir, I just want to say only one sentence to the hon. Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That matter is over now. *(Interruptions)*... That matter is over now.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

Foreign Policy of the Country

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, two days ago we had a very lively and stimulating debate on foreign policy in this House. Twenty hon. Members participated in the debate and I made some note of their names, but some of them are not here today. They are Shri Janeshwar Mishra, Shri Yashwant Sinha....

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA (Jharkhand): I am present here.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Occasionally, people mix you up with the other gentleman.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: I thought you are only mentioning the names of those who are not present.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: .... Dr. Karan Singh, Shri Nilotpal Basu, Shri S.S. Chandran, Dr. Alladi P. Rajkumar, Dr. P.C. Alexander, Shrimati Ambika Soni, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Shri Shankar Roy Chowdhury, Shri Anand Sharma, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Shri Chandan Mitra, Shri Bashistha Narain Singh, Shri Eknath Thakur, Shri R.S. Gavai, Shri M.P. Abdussamad Samadani, Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz, Shri Abu Asim Azmi and Shri Ashwani Kumar. Many constructive and imaginative suggestions were made and I have taken careful note of them. Embarassing but genuine encomiums were showered on me and I am indeed grateful. I tried to do my best. That is all, I or any other Foreign Minister can do. We are living in interesting times. It is a good time to be the Foreign Minister of a great country like India.

What is particularly gratifying is the unanimous view expressed on the need for maintaining national consensus on foreign policy and that broad national consensus had existed for 57 years, with one or two occasions when there was a little wavering. Now this consensus has enabled our country to play an influential and effective role in world affairs. I can assure you, hon. Members, that the UPA Government regards this consensus in the foreign policy as a precious legacy which we will endeavour to maintain and build upon as we face new challenges of a rapidly transforming international environment.

Let me, Sir, give a grief historical-cum-philosophical dimension to our debate. The 19th century was wedded to the gospel of progress, that is, progress was inherent in history. The 20th century proved that this was not so. I don't consider the two World Wars and the invention of weapons of mass destruction as signs of progress. It was, therefore, humankind's hope that the 21st century would usher in an era of peace, goodwill and harmony. Instead, the tragedy of 9.11.2001 has rekindled the climate of fear and hatred that we thought we had put behind us and has spawned the relentless violence, terrorism and conflict that continue to ravish the cities of Iraq and threatening to engulf the other regions as well.

Sir, one of the items which I had hoped to be raised in this House was: How do we, in the world as a whole and in the western countries in

particular, deal with the question of the Muslim world? There are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. Four hundred and fifty million of them live in this sub-continent. There is no doubt that from Mauritania to Maidan-i-Sumatra, the Muslim psyche has been hurt, and every effort should be made that this is put right; otherwise, this issue is likely to dominate the agenda of international affairs for a number of years to come, and; it will do nobody any good. We have some acquaintance because Islam came to India in the 8th century. We are good at reconciling contradictions. Crisis management is our forte. So, I told our American friends that in this area we are in a position to help and advice you.

Sir, the world is fragmenting and integrating at the same time. This is a paradoxical situation, and the world community has to come in terms with it. India with its plural democracy and its secular ethos has a message of reconciliation and tolerance that the world solely needs to regain a sense of sanity and balance. Before I deal with specific issues relating to our Foreign Policy, on which several members have offered, as I said, useful comments, or, sought clarifications, let me make a couple of broad observations. And I do this with great respect.

Sir, the first point that I would like to make is that the Foreign Policy of the UPA Government is made in the Ministry of External Affairs and not through the media. Second, to determine what the Foreign Policy of the Government is, one should pay attention to authoritative statements made by the Government, through its designated spokesmen, especially the statements that are made here in this august House and in Parliament. There will always be media reports that may seek to confuse the issue, or, claim to quote someone within the Government, I think, we should ignore such reports. The authoritative statements on India's Foreign Policy are statements that are made openly and on record in Parliament. I said that the UPA Government values national consensus and continuity as well in our Foreign Policy. An observation was made that while we profess to practice continuity, we then proceed to make change in the policy. Now, that depends on the circumstances. The international or national agendas are not static. In today's fast-moving world momentous events are rushed through, and we have to respond to them. Sometimes, the response is not as quick as it might be, and sometimes, to the good things, the responses are immediate because to make Foreign Policy, instant Foreign Policy, to answer questions of the media, is getting into troubled waters. So, one has to exercise a great deal of judgement and a great deal of patience and skill.

Sir, there are fundamental elements underlying India's Foreign Policy which constitute an element of continuity. To the extent that the previous Government recognised these fundamentals, or, based the country's Foreign Policy on these principles, naturally, there will be continuity. However, the are elements in the NDA's Foreign; Policy, and the manner in which the policy was implemented with which we do not agree, as you did not sometimes agree with us. That does not mean that there are fundamental or basic shifts in our Foreign Policy because they are not; there is no room for them. And those aspects where change was necessary, changes were made and will be made. For example, in our judgment, the NDA Government should have paid more attention to our immediate neighbours and not kept totally preoccupied with Pakistan. We have corrected that. I myself made Nepal my first destination, after taking over as the External Affairs Minister.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

NDA's Pakistan policy was a series of flip-flops with no clear strategy. The UPA Government, by contrast, has a clear-cut and well-thought out road map for peace with Pakistan, which it is implementing with a steady hand. Now, take for example from Lahore to Kargil, from Agra to Islamabad, 6th January, 2004, here, I want to compliment my dear colleague and friend, Shri Yashwant Sinha, you see the contrast in Agra handled by a non-professional at a high position and you see Islamabad, civil servant, trained mind, and he achieves, 06.01.04, composite dialogue element.

SHRI RAJIV SHUKLA (Uttar Pradesh): What a solidarity!

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: I want to mention this to you because I know you have a difficult task. So, when you came from Islamabad, after January 6, 2004, we congratulated... *(Interruptions)* अरे मेरे भाई, जरा सुन तो लो। ...(व्यवधान)... अरे भाई, मैं तो आप की तारीफ कर रहा हूं।

श्री रुद्रनारायण पणि (उड़ीसा): सर, उन्होंने कहा what a solidarity और उनका उत्तर देते हुए मैंने कहा कि इन्होंने सरकार के हैड के लिए ठीक व्यक्ति का चयन किया।

श्री के॰ नटवर सिंह: तभी तो आप वहां बैठें हो।

श्री सभापति: आप दोनों अपनी तारीफ कर रहे हैं।

श्री राजीव शुक्ल: जसवन्त और यशवंत का फर्क तो नहीं है?

श्री के० नटवर सिंह: सर, अगर गुस्ताखी माफ करें तो यही कहूंगा कि इन के दामाद हमारे मंत्रालय में काम करते हैं और बहुत आला अफसर हैं। Now, Sir, let us turn...*(Interruptions)* Let me turn to the various elements of our foreign policy and in doing so, I also endeavour to respond to some of the queries which have been posed, as also some clarifications that were sought.

Sir, the UPA Government has been in office for seven months. It has not been in office for any longer period of time. Maybe, in some areas we have not been able to do what we might have. But I can assure you, if there are any lacunae, they will be put behind us.

During this period of seven months, our country's foreign policy has achieved significant successes and is well poised to meet the challenges that lie ahead, and there are challenges. India is, today, regarded as an indispensable partner by countries, big and small, all over the globe. The UPA Government leadership have come to enjoy a high standing and credibility in the international arena. With this brief span of time, we have played host to a large number of distinguished leaders from countries across the world, and these are Presidents of Russia, Nigeria, Korea, Sri Lanka, Slovak Republic, Chancellor of Germany, King of Bhutan, Prime Ministers of Singapore, Pakistan, Nepal, New Zealand, Morocco and Malaysia, and also the Foreign Ministers of Kuwait, France, Japan, Bangladesh, Senegal, Uzbekistan and Mexico; and, I am sure, members will agree, India is today a country which everyone wishes to remain engaged with.

The UPA Government attaches the highest priority to india's relations with its neighbours. A number of Members have expressed concerns about the situation in Nepal and have asked what our Government has done to address the situation. This is a legitimate question and I will try and answer this. On the one hand, we have started efforts to bring all political parties together on a national platform, and, on the other, encourage the monarchy and the political parties to work together to seek an early resolution of the continuing political crisis in Nepal. A grave challenge posed by Maoist insurgency, which is also a threat to India's security, as Shri Yashwant Sinha said, can only be met by forging of a broad national consensus within Nepal and a very close cooperation between India and Nepal. We have not hesitated to extend all possible assistance to the Royal Nepalese Army and security forces in Nepal in order to raise their

capabilities in dealing with the complexities of counter-insurgency warfare. The situation is very serious. We have increased surveillance along the Indo-Nepal border by deploying paramilitary forces. There is much better intelligence sharing and cooperation across the border. It must be recognised however, that we are faced with a complex situation and there are no easy answers. What I would like to assure the hon. Members of this House is our determination and resolve to safeguard India's interest and at the same time support Nepal to preserve and multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy. We will soon have the honour of receiving His Majesty, the Kind of Nepal to India and this will provide us an opportunity to redouble our efforts to see an improvement in the situation. We have hosted a number of high level visits from our neighbours. Soon after the UPA Government took office, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka paid a visit during which we reaffirmed our commitment to unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and our readiness to extend economic and security assistance to the island nation. The President of Sri Lanka was also here recently, in early November, and this provided an opportunity to exchange views on the emerging situation in Sri Lanka at the highest level. We established contacts with all political elements in Sri Lanka and today there is a national consensus in Sri Lanka towards maintaining the most friendly and cooperative relations with India. India has also emerged as a significant investor in Sri Lanka with Indian Oil Corporation establishing a major presence in the petroleum sector. Our trade is increasing and we are now on the threshold of forging a comprehensive economic partnership with our neighbour. Some Members have raised the issue of Indian fishermen being detained in Sri Lanka for violating maritime boundary. I am in touch with the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. I am in touch with other parties in Tamil Nadu. I am in touch with Members of Parliament.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Fishermen from Pondicherry are also affected.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Most certainly, Pondicherry is also adversely affected.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Violations are taking place daily but you have not stopped.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: It is necessary for our fishermen to avoid violating the international boundary just as we do not wish to see our territorial waters being violated by others. However, whenever Indian fishermen have strayed into Sri Lankan waters we have been able to obtain their

release through our good offices with Sri Lanka except in cases where there may have been some criminal offence committed. The Sri Lankan Government has been helpful in treating this as a humanitarian problem. I wish to inform House that we are currently working on a bilaterial MoU on Coöperation in Fisheries through which we will try and find a more enduring solution for such problems and I can assure the Members and we are fully seized of this problem. With Bhutan, we maintain the most cordial and friendly relations and India-Bhutan cooperation is a model for neighbours, both in our region as well as in the world. Our contacts at the highest level have been intensified in recent months. I myself paid a visit to Paro in October 2004. While His Majesty, the King of Bhutan paid a friendly visit to India in late November. I am planning to lead a delegation to Kurichu in Bhutan for the inauguration of an Indian assisted hydro-electric power plant in the presence of his Majesty, the King of Bhutan. As the House is aware His Majesty, the King of Bhutan would also be our Chief Guest at the Republic Day function next year. We have had a number of high level visits from Bangladesh, including by the Foreign Minister, Commerce Minister and the Finance Minister. The Prime Minister will soon be leading a delegation to Dhaka for the 13th SAARC Summit, when the SAARC completes twenty years, which will also provide us an occasion for us to have contacts at the highest level with our counterparts in the SAARC, during this Summit.

As various hon. Members have had occasion to point out, there are, of course, important issues on the bilateral agenda with Bangladesh. We have urged Bangladesh to fulfil their commitment, not allow its territory to be used by Indian insurgent groups and other hostile elements for carrying out violent activities in India's North-East. And, we will take it up again. On the other hand, we have offered to strengthen economic and trade links with that country, including through significant economic assistance for the development of its infrastructure. We have pointed out that the energy co-operation between India and Bangladesh and the willingness of Bangladesh to provide transit facilities to India's North-East would result in a win-win situation for both the countries. We will continue with our diplomatic efforts to achieve some progress in this regard. And, I intend to keep the House informed. Let me assure the House that even while continuing with our diplomatic efforts, we have taken steps to safeguard our security along the India-Bangladesh border. The fencing of the border is being accelerated. There is, now, increased deployment of paramilitary forces in a determined effort to check illegal immigration, smuggling and other criminal activities. There will be no slackening in our efforts in this regard.

With Maldives, we have excellent relations. We will soon be receiving President Gayoom on an official visit. Reflecting the importance that Maldives attaches to its relations with India, the country has established its High Commission in New Delhi and the new High Commissioner has recently presented his credentials to our President. We have expressed concern over the recent developments in Maldives. But we are encouraged that the process of democratic reforms, launched by President Gayoom, appears to be on track. Elections to the new *majlis,* their Parliament, are to be held shortly.

I would, now, like to turn to our relations with Pakistan. The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, had a landmark meeting with the President Musharref in New York on 24th September. There were two very important messages conveyed to the President Musharraf; one, the importance of implementing the assurance, contained in the January 6, 2004 joint statement that no territory, under the control of Pakistan, would be used for cross-border terrorism against India; and second, that no solution to the issue of Jammu & Kashmir could involve a redrawing of boundaries or any other partition of India on the basis of religion. This was re-affirmed to the Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, when he visited Delhi in late November, this year. The hon. Prime Minister had himself cleared any doubts on this score from the floor of this House, yesterday. Instead of constantly quoting what the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Pakistan have been reported as saying, why not pay attention to what our leaders are saying? There is no drift in the India's Pakistan policy. It was the NDA Government which travelled from Lahore to Kargil to Agra, and, then, to Islamabad through a number of energetic somersaults. The truth is that we have completed the first round of the composite dialogue. And, the second round is currently in progress. We have presented to Pakistan seventy-two items of Confidence Building Measures in every area of bilateral relations. To some, the response has been helpful; to some, has been constructive; to some, it has not been helpful as it might be; and, in others the talks are going on. The Foreign Secretaries of the two countries are due to meet in Islamabad on December 27 and 28 of 2004, where they will not only review the progress in the composite dialogue, but would also, in a substantive manner, discuss issues relating to peace, security as well as Jammu & Kashmir. I will myself be visiting Pakistan in February next year. The dialogue process is on track and we continue to make modest progress. As I have said earlier, when it comes to India-Pakistan relations, even a modest progress is worthy of respect. Let me also clarify the Government's position with regard to the Hurriat. The people of Jammu

and Kashmir are represented by the Government, which has been duly elected by them through free and fair elections. The restoration of peace in the State is something that we are in constant communication with the elected Government. However, we are also prepared to talk to those unelected individuals or groups who shun violence and who are ready to contribute to the restoration of peace in the State. As to permitting the Hurriat leaders to meet Pakistan officials, I don't think that we have inaugurated a new policy in this regard. As was pointed out by the hon. Member earlier in the debate, President Musharraf himself met Hurriyat leaders during his visit for the Agra Summit in July 2001.

Let me also assure Members that there is no third party presence in the India-Pakistan talks, nor is there any likelihood of this in the future. Our view is that the Government of India represents the wishes and aspirations of the people of India, which includes the people of Jammu & Kashmir. I hope this will set to rest any uncertainty or doubt in this regard.

Before I turn to other issues, let me also dispel the doubts that have been expressed about what our policy is with regard to the proposed gas pipeline from Iran *via* Pakistan to India. Our position has been clearly spelt out in the Joint Statement issued on September 24, 2004 after the meeting between our Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf. The relevant paragraph says and I quote: "The possibility of a gap pipeline *via* Pakistan to India was also discussed. It was felt that such a project could contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the people of both countries and should be considered in the larger context of expanding trade and economic relations between India and Pakistan." Our Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas has already held talks with the Iranian side and has invited his Pakistani counterpart to discuss this proposal in detail and we will, of course, take the House into confidence once these talks are held. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, we are looking at various options, with a view to securing energy supplies for our economic development. On the Munnabao-Khokrapar rail link, I had expressed our hope to ensure the operation of the route from October, 2, 2005. Actually, Our Railway Minister had spoken to the Prime Minister of Pakistan when he was here. He said that as far as India was concerned we would be able to be ready by 2nd October, 2005, that is, on Gandhiji's birthday when the traffic would start. Now, our Pakistan friends are saying that from their side there is a metre gauge. Now, it makes no difference. Our passengers can get down, walk across and go by metre gauge. But if you say that metre gauge conversion into broad guage will hold the process, we are

quite willing to, in a spirit of friendship, good neighbourliness, help them. We will request them that we can do this jointly if they want. We have all the expertise, and we will give them. I intend proposing this to the Pakistani Foreign Minister when I meet him in Dhaka.

As would be apparent, the UPA Government has implemented its policy of maintaining frequent and regular contacts and wide-ranging discussions with all our neighbours, at all levels, in order to take forward and to maximise opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. The Prime Minister acknowledged that the agreement signed on the 6th January, 2004 between President Musharraf and former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vijapayeeji, is an extremely important one and we want to carry this forward. We have no hesitation in acknowledging this at all.

While doing so, the Government has never hesitated to address the issues on which there may be differences, but has done so in the spirit of friendship in a constructive search for practical and mutually acceptable solutions. It is in this spirit that we will go to the forthcoming SAARC Summit, which will be held in Dhaka in January next year. We remain committed to the collective future of peace and prosperity for the entire South Asian Region. In the past six months, there has been an accelerated momentum in our relations with China. The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, recently met his Chinese counterpart, Mr. Wen Jiabao, in Vientiane during the ASEAN Summit. The Chinese leader said that the most important item on his agenda in 2005 would be the visit to India. Four rounds of talks have already been held between the special representatives of the two countries on the boundary question. The importance attached to these relations was also reflected in the recent visit of two senior Chinese Councillors to India as also in my own meetings with the Chinese Foreign Minister on four occasions in Qingtao, Jakarta, New York and Almaty. During his visit to India, State Councillor Tang Jia Xuan, who was also one time Foreign Minister, recognised the active role that Indian could play in international affairs and in the UN Security Council. Indo-US relations are special, precisely because we are both vibrant democracies. Our relations have expanded across the board. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met President Bush in New York in September, 2004, and both leaders reaffirmed Indo-US strategic partnership as also their mutual desire to take our relations forward, to widen them, to deepen them and to broaden them. It was the UPA Government which concluded the long pending first phase of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership, known as NSSP, with the United States and has also taken

forward the dialogue within the framework of the high-level Technology Cooperation Group. Sir, a reference was made to the NSSP and a question was asked whether we have surrendered before the US. This is not so. This is again an uninformed comment, if I may respectfully say so. We have concluded a document which sets our reciprocal obligations on both the countries. The agreement makes US Licensing policy and procedures both, transparent and predictable. End-use verification is a consultative process to be undertaken by mutual consent. This is an agreement between equals, it is reflective of the strategic partnership that the two countries wish to promote. It is the first in a series of steps to build mutual confidence and trust, leading to progressively higher levels of interaction in the high technology areas.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the NSSP announcement of January 13, 2004, was based on the framework resulting from the discussions which took place with the United States on December 19, 2003. Perhaps, Shri Sinha's memory may be failing because "the US origin items" were contemplated as a part of that arrangement. As a result of negotiations we undertaook in 2004, we have today a better and more efficient framework of cooperation, with the foundations laid by you. Under the high-level Technology Cooperation Group, the two sides will be pursuing closer cooperation in the areas of Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Defence and Nano Technology. The Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, was here recently and this gave us an opportunity for a high-level review of Indo-US relations and a discussion on how we could build upon the convergences in our relationship. It is true that our perspectives on certain specific issues are different but we do share a great and enduring affinity as people are wedded to democratic values. We are ready to work together and share concerns. Sir, I would like to share with the House our deep concern over the reported supply of sophisticated arms to Pakistan.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Would you yield for a minute?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Oh; yes.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, I had raised a very specific issue about NSSP when I talked about end-use verification. And I had said that it was my understanding, and I will be quite willing to be contradicted by the hon. Minister. In fact, I am giving him an opportunity to contradict me that US origin items of dual use coming from third countries will not be subjected to end-use verification as US origin items coming directly from the US will. This is the specific question which I have raised. And, as I said I am willing

to be contradicted by the Minister, but if an agreement has been concluded, and this is something which I said, this is not part of the agreement which had been reached in December, 2003. There was no agreement with regard to end-use verification. We had not reached any final conclusion, but if you have reached any final conclusion, then please clarify whether it will include US-origin items from third countries also.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, I don't intend to do so. I have no desire to contradict you. I think our objective is one and the same, and I will see what I can say in response to what you have raised.

I would like to share with the House our deep convern over the reported supply of sophisticated armaments to Pakistan by the US. We have communicated to the US that such a decision could impact adversely on the onging dialogue process between India and Pakistan, which the US itself has supported. It may also erode the goodwill and friendly feeling that exist for the United States in India, both as a sister democracy as well as a strategic partner. I do not think we could have put in more strongly. The views of the Government of India on the supply of sophisticated arms to Pakistan have been conveyed at the highest levels. Here again, I would request hon. Members to pay attention to what the spokesmen of the Government are saying on record, instead of drawing conclusion from comments ascribed to various anonymous sources. The authoritative view of the Government of India, as I have just spelt out, has been conveyed at the highest level to the US Administration, including by the Raksha Mantri and myself recently to Mr. Donald Rumsfeld. The Prime Minister himself confirmed this to the House. Indeed, while there have been no contrary signals emanating from the UPA Government on US supply of weapons to Pakistan, two critical decision in this regard were made on your watch as Foreign Minister. President Musharraf was promised a three billion dollar package, including a 1.5 million dollar in armaments, during a visit to Camp David on 24th June, 2003. Yet, the subsequent meeting with his US counterpart—when you had your meeting with your counterpart on 20th January, 2004—do not reveal, as far as I know, that this issue was taken up. If it was taken up then you can make it clear and I will certainly accept what you say. But we were not in office then.

SHRI YASHWANT SINGH: Sir, as far as that issue is concerned, the details of what they are going to supply was made known only later. There were no details. They had agreed in Camp David for a three billion package, of which 1.5 billion was supposed to be for arms. But as far as the details are concerned, you know, as long as those arms which are meant

for what the Americans claim it is, namely, for fighting terrorism in Pakistan, we could say okay; that India can live with. But if they include naval equipment, they include anti-tank equipment, they include F-16s, Orions, and all those, then it becomes diffcult. Now, this list is of recent time. This was not there when I was the Foreign Minister, and that is why I am saying that when this list became known and, particularly, worrisome is the supply of F-16s. That is where we had to protest.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, I think we are in the same wavelength. The fact of the matter is when this was announced in 2003, the three billion dollar package, including 1.5 million dollar for armaments, the obvious conclusion was that this kind of amount can't be used for weapons against terrorists. They were to be legal weapons which would be used against us. You know as well as I do, and the list is neither here nor there. The other day, Shri Pranab Mukherjee said very bluntly to the Press that they are not used against terrorists, the kind of weapons which they are using. We had three wars with Pakistan, and they were used against us. Another point that was raised was that Pakistan was made a major non-NATO Ally status on 18th March, 2004. I don't know whether Mr. Collin Powel informed you that he was going to Islamabad next day and he was going to do so.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: There will be records, I am sure Mr. Minister, of a conversation between Mr. Powel and me which you can, I am sure, see whenever you like, and that will clarify the whole situation. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: I think, this is a happy situation that we should welcome. ....*(Interruptions)*.... I tell you one thing. I did tell Mr. Powel when I met him that you are taking us by surprise; you could have taken us into confidence. ....*(Interruptions)*....

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी (पश्चिम बंगाल): सर, Strobe Talbot नहीं आया। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री के० नटवर सिंह: सर, Strobe Talbot पर बहुत कह दिया। Now, I turn to President Putin. President Putin's visit to India has demonstrated that our time-tested and strategic relationship with Russia remains constrant in the changing global and regional environment. Cooperation in Space and Energy has further strengthened the stratic nature of our relations. The sigining of four Agreements and six MoUs during the visit indicates the depth of our relations and the transition from a declaratory phase to one in which we are taking concrete steps to implement our professed

intentions. Against this background, it is odd that we have heard comments which suggest that there is some kind of a setback to Indo-Russion relations. I must also mention here that the on-going annual trilateral meetings among the Foreign Ministers of India, Russia and China have now acquired greater substance. At our meeting in Almaty on October 21st this year, we decided to explore trilateral economic cooperation including in third countries. India has offered to host the first business conference among the three countries early next year. There is no change in Russia's commitment to honour all its obligations with regard to the on-going cooperation in the setting up of two power reactors at Koodankulam. As pointed out by the Prime Minister, with respect to additional fuel supplies, discussions are continuing. Surpirisingly, not much was said during the debate on our growing relations with the European Union. The declaration of Strategic Partnership between India and the EU during Prime Minister's visit to the Hague in November 2004 is yet another recognition of the growing perception of India as an indispensable partner by the international community. It adds substance to our already wide-ranging relationship with the EU and will now provide the impetus for a Political Declaration and an Action Plan which will be completed at the next Indo-EU Summit in New Delhi. I would like to remind Members that the EU is now an association of 25 European democracies with a population of over 450 million people. As hon. Members are aware, India's "Look East Policy" was conceived and initiated by the Congress Government. The UPA Government has given a new dimension to this as we promote relations with ASEAN countries both within the BIMSTEC and the Indo-ASEAN Summit dialogue. We see our relationship linked with our economic and security interests, particularly for our East and North-East. The first India-ASEAN Car Rally, which was first suggested by Shri Vijpayee in Bali last year, was flagged off by the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, from Guwahati. Thirty thousand people were present that day in the Guwahati Stadium. That had not happened for decades. The document on Indo-ASEAN partnership of peace, progress and properity adopted with the India-ASEAN Summit on Novemebr 30, 2004, signifies that India now forms inner core of countries in ASEAN's relationship with the rest of the world.

Now, Sir, I come to West Asia. The linkages and interests, that we have with West Asia and the Gulf, provide the basis for intensification of our relations with all key countries in the region as well as the Gulf Co-operation Council, with which we have signed a Framework Agreement for Economic Co-operation. I will be visiting some of the Gulf countries later this month and also intend to meet all our Ambassadors in that part of the

world to emphasise the promotion of our interests in this region where more than 3.5 million of our citizens live, prosper and work. We have established a 24 hour Help-line Centre in Saudi Arabia for our citizens. We intend to extend this to other capitals also. All our Missions and Posts in the Gulf have, for the last several months, been observing an 'Open House' once a month to enable our nationals to meet senior officials without appointment to seek any assistance they require. The UPA Government has taken a decision to restore the Haj subsidy, which had been reduced by the previous Government. Flights for the Haj pilgrimage have already begun. More than 1,25,000 of our nationals are likely to perform the next Haj. This is the largest in recent times.

Friendship with the Palestinian people and our support for their cause is cardinal element of our foreign policy. I led a multi-party delegation to Cairo to pay homage to the memory of the late Palestinian leader, Mr. Yassir Arafat. Earlier, in September, my colleague, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri E. Ahammed, had visited Ramallah with a good-will message from our Prime Minister reiterating our unwavering support to Palestine. Let me state categorically that our friendly relations and co-operation with Israel do not at all detract from, or dilute, our support for the Palestinian people and we have never hesitated to declare our support in international fora.

Sir, our policy of not sending troops to Iraq, as endorsed by the Parliament in May, 2003, remains the guiding principle. At the same time, we have maintained our engagement with the friendly people of Iraq. Our support for the forthcoming election process in Iraq and humanitarian and reconstruction aid underscores our desire for restoration of political stability in Iraq, but the situation in Iraq is both, alarming and disturbing. One of the hon. Members asked whether we were doing anything in order to support reconstruction of Iraq. I wish to inform the House, Sir, that we have provided assistance worth $20 million bilaterally and another $ 10 million through the Trust Funds of the World Bank and the UNDP. We are also involved in training of Iraqi engineers and displomats; both together add up to about 125 seats per year. We have also offered to train Iraqi electoral officers in India and have invited the Election Commission of Iraq to send a delegation to visit India. No Indian personnel is going either to Jordan or to Iraq. Once the security situation improves, we have agreed to resume some of our ongoing humanitarian projects including the setting up of a hospital in Najaf.

6.00 P.M.

Now, Sir, a few words about Africa. In the last few months, there has been an exchange of high level visits from Africa as part of the 'Focus Africa Policy' of the UPA Government. Greater economic and technical co-operation, both bilateral as well as within the context of the African Union and India's contributions to peace-keeping Missions in several African countries, all reflect this desire. The announcement by our President, while visiting Sourth Africa in September, 2004, of an ambitious project for linking all 53 African countries through a satellite as well as a fibre optic based network, is reflective of our resolve to contribute to African development.

Central Asia is part of our extended neighbourhood. Besides the longstanding historical and cultural linkages, we also see Central Asia as an important economic partner as pointed out by Dr. Karan Singh, particularly in terms of our energy requirements. We are, therefore, moving quickly to intensify our relations with the countries of the region through high level visits and increased economic and commercial interactions.

Intensified relations with Latin America and the Caribbean are reflected in the Ministerial visits of Foreign Ministers of Mexico, Venezuela, Surinam, and, the visit of Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Rao Inderjit Singh to Panama, Columbia, Dominican Republic and El Salvador. Early during the next year, we hope to host the President of Chile; and, the Vice-President of Surinam would be coming as the Chief Guest for the *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas* next month, reflecting the linkages that India has with the region. Our collaboration with Brazil on the Security Council reform, and, in the WTO reflects the growth in our commonalities with this Latin American giant. These initiatives taken by the UPA Government should allay the apprehensions expressed by some members that we are neglecting the Latin American and Caribbean regions; we are not.

Let me now turn to the United Nations. The efforts of the UPA Government have ensured that India's claim today to be a permanent member of the Security Council within the context of overall reform of the UN has been well established within the international community. Intensive diplomacy on our part has resulted in the creation of a common platform of the four most credible aspirants for permanent membership of the Security Council. India, Brazil, Germany and Japan who are mutually supportive of each other, have agreed to work together to realize their shared objective. We also support African representation in the

permanent membership in an expanded Security Council, if and when it takes place.

Recently, the panel appointed by the UN Secretary General on "Threats, Challenges and Change" has submitted a number of recommendations on institutional changes in the UN, including the composition of the UN Security Council. We are studying them, and, in consultation with other Member States, we will decide how to take the process of reform forward during the next year; next year being the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It was hoped that the reforms and restructuring could take place in 1995 at the 50th anniversary, but it didn't happen.

Before I conclude, I would now like to say a few words on some of the doubts and misgivings expressed in the House on our claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The Prime Minister himself stated yesterday and I quote:

"There is no confusion regarding our position on our candidature for a permanent seat in the Security Council. At this point, all permanent members have veto powers. We are a candidate. The issue may arise in respect of any new permanent members who may be admitted. Our fundamental position remains clear. We do not believe that there should be any discrimination in the Security Council and there should be no distinction between permanent members who have veto and those who don't. This position is based on the broadest possible political consensus". We intend to press home this position vigorously in the days to come.

Doubts were raised as to whether under the UPA Government India-Russia relations have received some kind of a setback, and, I am saying this in the context of what happened during President Putin's visit. President Putin's remarks, at a joint press conference with our Prime Minister, were unfortunately misinterpreted by some journalists who thought he was implying that new permanent members to the Security Council would not enjoy veto status. This was set right by President Putin himself in very categorical terms the very next day, and, I happened to be there when he made this observation to the Press. When I said, "Thank you, Mr. President", and, he said, "No, it was very necessary for me because I thought I had made myself clear on the first day". Obviously, there was something wrong in the translation.

Here again, we should avoid the propensity to swallow what the foreign policy experts, hidden and not so hidden, pronounced on such important

matters. These important matters are handled by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Committee on Security, of which you had been a distinguished member. Some Members spoke about non-alignment—I will not take very long—whether it remained relevant in our times. In our Congress Party manifesto, we pledged that we would give the policy on non-alignment a new direction keeping in view political and economic changes that are taking place in our region. And, with your permission, Sir, I would like to quote a very distinguished European Statesman, Richard Weizsacker, President of Germany for ten years. In his Nehru Memorial Lecture this is what he said. And Germany was not a non-aligned country. "Nehru was among the first and the foremost to look for a non-bloc internationalism. His idea of non-alignment became a global importance. He spoke about peace clubs against cold-war clubs, nuclear clubs. He was pondering how to create a sort of no-war land between the military blocs. From the outset, his thoughts became and remained fruitful. Non-alignment was aiming at more than distance to blocs. It was a denial of the gist of bloc-thinking, an endeavour to detect inside those blocs growing trends of openness, of looking for common interests, of conditions how to survive together, of *detente* policy recommended and practised by leaders like Willy Brandt, of arms control and arms reduction proposals, such as Pugwash Conference ideas which served later at initiatives for the SALT Agreement and the like. Nehru's non-aligned policy is not a means to prevent co-operation. It is, on the contrary, an invitation never to give up the search for new ways leading to peaceful co-existence, *detente* and reconciliation.

Sir, obviously, the international agenda has changed. So, naturally, the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement has changed. But, let us not mix up the Non-Aligned Movement with non-alignment. Non-alignment is good for ever. The Non-Aligned Movement has to address itself to the problems like terrorism, drugs, HIV AIDS, financial crises, population control, environment and, here, the Non-Aligned Movement needs diplomatic blood transfusion, and we intend to give it as much as we can, within our limitations. There are so many other members. The original members, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Egypt, are not so active in the Non-Aligned Movement. But I think the Non-Aligned Movement remains relevant for the rest as non-alignment.

In the last seven months, the UPA Government has redeemed that pledge and given us a foreign policy which is purposeful, result-oriented and pro-active. While it has been the endeavour of this Government to follow the basic principles of our foreign policy which have guided India

since its independence, we have re-oriented and readjusted it wherever necessary in response to the new challenges that we confront today. It is a matter of satisfaction that today India enjoys a unique profile in the international arena as a factor for stability, a model for plural and secular democracy and an economic powerhouse that is destined to play a greater role in international affairs. We acknowledge that many difficult challenges lie ahead and our resources are limited, but we face the future with both confidence and optimism.

I just want to say briefly in reply to what Shri Yashwant Sinha said. Under the NSSP, the US-origin items, whether directly supplied to us from US or from any other source will always be the basis of negotiations. It would not have been tenable to exclude US-origin goods or technology merely because they were obtained from non-US sources. We ourselves would not accept such a distinction with respect to Indian-made techno-logy or sensitive goods such as our software. Sir, in conclusion, I just want to say that some references were make to what I said in Korea:

परवाना हूं, शमा तो हो, रात तो हो,

मरने के लिए तैयार हूं, कुछ बात तो हो

इसको जरा आप देख लेते। ऐसा कुछ नहीं कहा गया था। There have been broad national consensus on our Foreign Policy.

श्री यशवंत सिन्हा: मैंने तो यहां यह कहा था कि अखबारों में यह बात छपी थी कि प्रधानमंत्री जी ने आपको बुला कर डांटा, यह सही नहीं था, बहुत अच्छा हुआ कि इसका क्लैरिफिकेशन आ गया, क्योंकि कोई भी विदेश मंत्री इस तरह के सिच्युएशन में काम नहीं कर सकता। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री नटवर सिंह: नहीं, ...नहीं, मेरे भाई।....(व्यवधान) जुगलबन्दी तो है ही, और क्या किया जाए। आपने जो कहा कि अखबारों में लिख दिया कि नटवर सिंह हवाई अड्डे से सीधे वहां पहुंच गए, क्या कहें, और यह कहानी भी अखबार में छप गई, और आपके साथी इस कदर गर्म हो गए कि पूछिए मत।

प्रो॰ रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश): अखबारों में गलत छपता रहता है।

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Let me conclude this,as I must. This broad national consensus we have had since the time of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and, any Government that comes into office, of whatever colour, cannot depart from the broad outlines of India's Foreign Policy. Non-Congress Governments, as there have been several of them, have not attempted to change the broad framework laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru. Of course,

details have to be filled in; circumstances change and situations change; but the broad framework that he had set, has been upheld even by non-Congress Governments at the Centre. This is because India's Foreign Policy is not dedicated to a dogma; it is dedicated to a purpose and the purpose is to make this world peaceful, tranquil, harmonious and friendly. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has given a detailed answer. *(Interruptions)* The House is adjourned till 11.00 a.m. tomorrow, the 23rd December, 2004.

The House then adjourned at thirteen minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 23rd December, 2004.

MGIPMRND—4644RS—06-06-2005.